(c) The minimum subscription was 500 grammes as per the Scheme. The maximum deposited by individuals is not readily available.

(d) and (e) There is no proposal under consideration at present.

Opening of more cash payment centres in Hyderabad & Secunderabad

68. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the problems of Hyderabad and Secundrabad Telephone subscribers with regard to the centralised bill payment system;

(b) whether it is a fact that there is a long standing demand from the public for opening of more cash payment centres under the jurisdiction of Hyderabad telecom; and

(c) what are the proposals of Hyderabad Telecom in this regard to open more centres for payment of phone bills?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) to (c) The information has been called for and will be laid on the table of the House.

Damage to communication equipments in Punjab due to recent floods

69. SHRI JAGIR SINGH DARD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of the damage done to the communication equipments in Punjab due to heavy rains and floods in the State recently;

(b) what are the names of the most affected areas in Punjab; and

(c) what steps have been taken by the Government so far to set right the communication phone lines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) 16 exchanges were affected. Hence services were interrupted for few days. About 20,000 lines were affected due to major cable failure. STD services for Ropar were cut-off due to damage of PCM cables. Many open wire lines were broken as posts fall down.

(b) Patiala, Ropar, Amritsar, Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur, Jullundar Districts were most affected.

(c) Exchanges have been repaired/replaced barring few towns. Major cable break down are being attended on war footing. Overhead lines are to be re-erected after the flood waters recede.

Measures to avoid the disturbance in telephone services during the rains

70. SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that large number of telephones have become dead due to heavy rains and floods in the country;

(b) if so, what steps have been taken by Government on warfooting to put them in order;

(c) whether it is a fact that with every rain such situation is created; and

(d) if so, what long term and permanent measures have been taken by Government to avoid recurrence of such situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No, Sir. Telecom services have been affected only partially due to heavy rains and floods in some parts of the country.

(b) Immediate corrective action is taken to attend the faults and restore the affected telephones by mobilising resources. The staff and officers work round the clock to repair the faulty telephones in quickest possible time in such affected areas.